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R 221814Z FEB 88
FM JCS WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUWSAAA/MAC INTEL CEN SCOTT AFB IL//INO//
RUDHAAB/CDRUSAITAC [] VA//KT//
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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5256
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6461
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7297
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6403
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 7334
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8828
RUEABND/DEAHQS WASHDC
RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN//SCJ2/SCJ5/SCDC/SCFA/SOCSOUTH//
RUEOGWA/CDRUSASAALA FT CLAYTON PM//SOSA-PT//
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEACUS/HQS/CUSTOMS WASHDC
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STATE FOR H - ROBERT DOWNEY, ARA/PC - ZANDRA FLEMISTER

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: SNAR, BL, EAID

SUBJECT: STAFFDEL VISIT: A TRIP WORTH A THOUSAND
CABLES.

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

SUMMARY

2. CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS BRIAN HANSON AND RAPHAEL PERL
WERE EXPOSED TO THE FULL RANGE OF ANTI-NARCOTICS
ACTIVITIES IN BOLIVIA DURING THEIR FEB. 5-9 VISIT. THE
TWO WALKED THROUGH ERADICATED COCA FIELDS AND SPOKE WITH
PEASANTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT ERADICATION PROJECT
AT VILLANUEVA; OVERFLEW DESTROYED CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIPS
IN THE CHAPARE; WENT ON AN AIR-MOBILE INTERDICTION
OPERATION IN THE BENI; AND TOOK AN ORIENTATION RIDE ON
THE PIRANHA RIVER-PATROL CRAFT. THE HANDS-ON

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ORIENTATION BROUGHT INTO SHARP FOCUS THE DIFFICULTIES
INHERENT IN BOLIVIAN OPERATIONS AND FOSTERED A SEAT-
OF-THE-PANTS UNDERSTANDING OF AND APPRECIATION FOR THE
PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

HITTING THE DECKS RUNNING

3. FOLLOWING AN ALL-NIGHT FLIGHT FROM MIAMI, HANSON
AND PERL WERE MET AT SANTA CRUZ AIRPORT FRIDAY MORNING
AT 0630 BY NAU SMITH. THE GROUP DEPARTED IMMEDIATELY
VIA DEA AIRCRAFT FOR A DIRT AIRSTRIIP IN THE CHAPARE,
THE TAKE-OFF POINT FOR OVERLAND TRAVEL TO THE PILOT
COCA-ERADICATION PROJECT AT VILLANUEVA.

COCA GROWING AS A FAMILY AFFAIR

4. THE SCOPE OF THE COCA PROBLEM WAS SET EARLY ON FOR
HANSON AND PERL AS THEY SAW ENTIRE PEASANT FAMILIES
DRYING COCA LEAVES AT PRACTICALLY EVERY CLEARING
ALONG THE ROAD TO VILLANUEVA. RELIANCE ON COCA AS A
CASH CROP WAS ALSO HAMMERED HOME BY THE LACK OF ROADS,
TOWNS, INDUSTRIES AND FARMS.

DIRECO BRIEFS, STAFFDEL WALKS

5. AT VILLANUEVA DIRECO PERSONNEL PRESENTED A
COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING ON THE COCA-ERADICATION PROGRAM
AND EXPLAINED IN DETAIL THE STRATEGY OF SURROUNDING
AND ISOLATING HARD-CORE COCA AREAS WITH VOLUNTARILY
PARTICIPATING SYNDICATES. THE LEADER OF THE VILLANUEVA
SYNDICATE FOLLOWED WITH AN EFFECTIVE SPEECH ABOUT THE
NECESSITY OF BREAKING THE COCA STRANGEHOLD DESPITE
THE INHERENT HARDSHIPS IN DOING SO. HANSON, PERL
AND HALF THE POPULATION OF VILLANUEVA THEN SET OFF ON
A TWO-KILOMETER HIKE THROUGH THE BUSH TO INSPECT
ERADICATED COCA FIELDS AND TO HEAR FIRST-HAND FROM
LOCAL PEASANTS THEIR PERCEPTIONS ON THE NEED FOR A
RELIABLE CROP-SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM.

INTRODUCTION TO INTERDICTION
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 LA PAZ 01971

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6. ON ARRIVAL AT THE UMOPAR TRAINING BASE AT CHIMORE,
THE STAFFDEL RECEIVED A BRIEFING ON THE TRAINING PROGRAM
(INCLUDING THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY A CORRUPT UMOPAR

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OFFICER CORPS), A SHORT TOUR OF THE BASE, AND A MOST USEFUL SESSION ON DEA INTERDICTION ACTIVITY IN THE CHAPARE. HANSON AND PERL ALSO SAW THE RESULTS OF THE U.S. BORDER PATROL PRESENCE: FOUR TRUCKS CARRYING 13 TONS OF PRECURSOR MATERIAL THAT HAD BEEN SEIZED THE DAY BEFORE AND WERE ON DISPLAY AT THE CAMP.

7. ON THE 90-MINUTE UH-1H FLIGHT FROM CHIMORE TO TRINIDAD, THE STAFFDEL SAW CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIPS THAT HAD BEEN CRATERED BY UMOPAR/DEA PERSONNEL. THEY ALSO GOT A GOOD FEEL FOR THE VASTNESS AND ISOLATION OF THE AREA IN WHICH WE OPERATE. ONCE IN TRINIDAD, HANSON AND PERL HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS WITH DEA, NAU AND U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL THE FULL RANGE OF ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES.

AIR-MOBIL OPS: AN OBJECT LESSON IN DIFFICULTIES

8. THE LAB RAID SCHEDULED FOR FEB 6 PROVED TO BE AN OBJECT LESSON IN THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN TRYING TO CONDUCT OPERATIONS IN AN AREA THE SIZE OF TEXAS. THE SUSPECTED LAB WAS NOT FOUND. UNSPECIFIC INTELLIGENCE A LACK OF FIXED-TARGET COORDINATES AND A VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF TOPOGRAPHICAL POINTS OF REFERENCE IN THE NOW-FLOODED BENI ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THE UNSUCCESSFUL OPERATION.

WRAP-UP BRIEFINGS ON TRAINING, RIVERINE OPS

9. TO CONCLUDE THE TRINIDAD PORTION OF THE TRIP, THE STAFFDEL MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE US MILITARY ADVANCED-TRAINING GROUP, TOURED THE UMOPAR BASE CAMP AND DISCUSSED WITH UMOPAR AND U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WAYS IN WHICH INTERDICTION COULD BE IMPROVED.

10. ON SUNDAY, HANSON AND PERL WERE BRIEFED FULLY ON THE RIVERINE PROGRAM BY DEA S/A BILLY MARTIN, BOLIVIAN NAVY PERSONNEL AND U.S. NAVY ADVISOR MIKE FITZGERALD. THE SESSION CONCLUDED WITH A CRUISE ON THE MAMORE RIVER THAT SHOWED THE LARGE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE PIRNAHAS.

11. ON ARRIVAL IN LA PAZ, THE STAFFDEL MET WITH NARCOTICS MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM AND ATTENDED A RECEPTION AT THE CHARGE'S RESIDENCE WHERE THEY HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET LEADING INDIVIDUALS FROM THE PRIVATE-SECTOR AS WELL AS BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES.

COMMENT

12. THE STAFFDEL APPEARED TO HAVE ENDED THE TRIP WITH A MUCH BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS ALL AGENCIES
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FACE IN TRYING TO DO BUSINESS HERE. MORE IMPORTANTLY,
THEY SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THE FRAGILITY OF THE PROGRAM
AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUING CLOSE COOPERATION BY ALL
CONCERNED.

(DRAFTED:NAU:PLSMITH) GREENLEE

END OF MESSAGE

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